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Your Acres for

the

SOIL BANK'S

CONSERVATION

RESERVE



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Soil Conservation Service

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Your Acres for **the SOIL BANK'S CONSERVATION RESERVE**

Here and there on the Nation's $4\frac{3}{4}$ million farms are some 50 million acres in crops that should be in permanent grass or trees. Sometimes it's a single field, sometimes an entire farm that needs to be taken out of cultivation.

Do you have any of these acres? Do you know which ones they are?

The cost-sharing provisions of the Conservation Reserve are designed to encourage farmers to shift 20 to 25 million of these mis-used acres out of crops and into grass, trees, wildlife cover, or water storage.

Many of these acres return little above production costs. Some are too close to bedrock or too steep to be tilled regularly. Others are too wet or too droughty for safe cropping.

Some of the acres are on the cropping borderline because rainfall is too scant more years than not. Many problem acres erode badly. Others are losing their capacity to produce for other physical reasons.

If you have some of these acres in your cropping system, the Conservation Reserve program may be a big help to you.

Technical Help Available

The Soil Conservation Service can give you the following kinds of assistance with your Conservation Reserve program:

- Counsel on advantages available to you in this program.
- Help in choosing, from a land-capability basis, your acres that will benefit most from the program.

The Soil Bank

The Soil Bank is designed to help farmers make a direct attack on crop surpluses, to retire and build up land not now needed for crops, and to protect farm net income while these changes are being made. Under the Soil Bank are two programs:

- The Acreage Reserve for temporary production cutbacks of "basic" crops now in oversupply.
- The Conservation Reserve for a more lasting shift of cropland and tame hay land to conservation uses.

Your local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee takes your application, helps you work out your contract plan. Get contract terms for your locality from the ASC Committee office in your county.

- Help in deciding whether to put your Conservation Reserve land in grass, trees, wildlife cover, or water storage.
- Help in working out a plan to get that land seeded to grasses and legumes, planted to trees, improved for wildlife, or used for water storage.
- Technical help in installing the contracted practices, except for those forestry practices for which technical help may be available from State forestry agencies.

Your Decision

Whether to place land in the Conservation Reserve rests solely with you. The long-range objective of the Conservation Reserve is to help check crop surpluses and protect resources for the future.

Look at the Conservation Reserve in light of your whole farming system and income requirements.

Get the facts on cost, expected income, and longtime consequences of using any field or part of it for crops. Compare these with the payments you would receive from the Soil Bank for putting your land into grass or trees or using it for water storage or wildlife cover.

Cost Sharing

Under the Conservation Reserve contract you may get up to 80 percent of the average cost of establishing the approved soil and water conservation practices on former cropland, plus yearly payments. The contracts run for 3, 5, or 10 years for grassed lands, 10 or more years for woodland.

Conservation practices eligible for cost-sharing payments under the Conservation Reserve program include:

- Establishing a permanent grass cover crop for soil protection.
- Planting trees or shrubs for soil protection.
- Building dams, pits, or ponds to impound water.
- Improving wildlife conditions through cover, water and marsh management, or dam and pond construction.





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Conservation Farm Plans

Fortunately, many farmers already have land-capability information on their acres. The 1,700,000 of them cooperating with soil conservation districts have their land use needs spelled out in their conservation farm plans.

These plans are based on land-capability information from your farm's soil survey. From the land-capability information the SCS technician outlines the alternative uses your land is suited for. You then can make the best choice for your situation, considering all your resources, your capital, your skills, and your desires. The record of these decisions makes up your conservation farm plan.

Your conservation farm plan is a good guide to how you can use the Conservation Reserve to make your best contribution to Soil Bank objectives.

Improve Your Land With Grass and Trees

Throughout the country a continuous cover of grass or trees has proved to be the best protection against erosion.

Grass-legume meadows, not harvested, make deposits of nitrogen and organic matter in nature's soil bank.

Putting cultivated ground into sod improves soil structure. Soil particles regroup, increasing the amount of air space around them. This helps your soil soak up rainfall at a faster rate and increases the total amount of moisture it will store.

Unharvested grasslands also encourage farm wildlife, such as pheasants, quail, and rabbits.

Programs Work Together

The Conservation Reserve is a new authority which can aid objectives of already going programs of soil and water conservation. Used wisely, it will be an important tool to

speed up needed soil- and water-conservation measures and make desirable land use changes on the country's farmlands and watersheds.

The Conservation Reserve offers farmers substantial cash aid in accomplishing the basic objective of soil conservation districts for using agricultural land within its capability.

Land-Capability Facts Put to Work

The Soil Bank Act directs that land-capability data be used to the fullest practicable extent in carrying out the Act.

Land capability means suitability of land for a particular use (cultivated crops, grass, or trees) without damage if the right combination of conservation practices is used.

This land-capability classification system provides a sound guide to acres to be placed in the Conservation Reserve and their needed conservation treatment.

To meet growing needs for basic soil facts and land-capability information in the Conservation Reserve and in other soil- and water-conservation work, the Soil Conservation Service has stepped up its rate of soil-survey work.



